

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

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May 2, 2019

Serdar Ertep
Federal On Scene Coordinator
Removal and Oil Programs Section
Emergency Response, Removal and Prevention Branch
Superfund Division, US EPA Region 4
61 Forsyth Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30303

Electronic submission

Re: Request for Threatened and Endangered Species Consultation
EPA Superfund Site Discharge Project – Society Hill
Darlington County, SC

Dear Mr. Ertep:

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) received the request for a rare, threatened and endangered species review for the superfund discharge project located in Society Hill, Darlington County, SC (approximately 34.525036, -79.837463). According to the provided description, the proposed project consists of treating over 400,000 gallons of caustic materials and wastewater to be discharged into the Great Pee Dee River, which lies adjacent to the project site. A detailed project description was not provided. The proposed site primarily consists of wooded land, fields and several impounded bodies of water, and is surrounded by wooded land.

According to SCDNR data, there are no occurrences of rare, threatened or endangered species within the provided project footprint. Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, requests for formal letters of concurrence with regards to federally listed species should be directed to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Great Pee Dee River, which runs in a north-south direction directly adjacent to the project site, is designated critical habitat for Atlantic sturgeon under the Endangered Species Act. SCDNR recommends consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for federal determination as to whether activities are likely to negatively impact the federally listed Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon or designated critical habitat for Atlantic sturgeon within the Great Pee Dee River.

Negative impacts to the discharge waters, the Great Pee Dee River and downstream, may be likely, but cannot be evaluated without further information regarding the types of compounds that would be released and at what concentrations. Numerous species of concern, including the aforementioned federally listed sturgeon species, that inhabit the Great Pee Dee River and the associated riparian ecosystems could be negatively affected.

The following table lists the species name and status of twenty species known to occur within 2-miles of the Great Pee Dee River downstream of the project footprint which are either listed or under consideration for listing by state or federal fish and wildlife agencies. Please keep in mind that this information is derived from existing databases and do not assume that it is complete. Areas not yet inventoried may contain significant species or communities.

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
<i>Acipenser brevirostrum</i>	Shortnose sturgeon	Federally Endangered / State Endangered
<i>Acipenser oxyrinchus</i>	Atlantic sturgeon	Federally Endangered
<i>Picoides borealis</i>	Red-cockaded woodpecker	Federally Endangered / State Endangered
<i>Mycteria americana</i>	Wood stork	Federally Threatened / State Endangered
<i>Lindera melissifolia</i>	Pondberry	Federally Endangered
<i>Lysimachia asperulifolia</i>	Roughleaf loosestrife	Federally Endangered
<i>Oxypolis canbyi</i>	Canby's dropwort	Federally Endangered
<i>Elassoma boehlkei</i>	Carolina pygmy sunfish	Federal ARS / State Threatened
<i>Heterodon simus</i>	Southern hog-nosed snake	Federal ARS / State Threatened
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald eagle	Bald & Golden Eagle Protection Act / State Threatened
<i>Corynorhinus rafinesquii</i>	Rafinesque's big-eared bat	State Endangered
<i>Elanoides forficatus</i>	Swallow-tailed kite	State Endangered
<i>Sterna antillarum</i>	Least tern	State Threatened
<i>Amorpha georgiana</i> var. <i>georgiana</i>	Georgia leadplant	Federal ARS
<i>Balduina atropurpurea</i>	Purple Balduina	Federal ARS
<i>Eupatorium paludicola</i>	Bay boneset	Federal ARS
<i>Lobelia boykinii</i>	Boykin's Lobelia	Federal ARS
<i>Macbridea caroliniana</i>	Carolina birds-in-a-nest	Federal ARS
<i>Moxostoma robustum</i>	Robust redhorse	Federal ARS
<i>Sporobolus teretifolius</i>	Wireleaf dropseed	Federal ARS

All species listed in the above table are designated as species of conservation priority by the South Carolina State Wildlife Action Plan¹ (SWAP). **An additional 43 species listed on the SWAP have been identified as occurring in and around the Great Pee Dee River corridor which may be impacted by this project.** SWAP species are those species of greatest conservation need not traditionally covered under any federal funded programs. Species are listed in the SWAP because they are rare or designated as at-risk due to knowledge deficiencies; species common in South Carolina but listed rare or declining elsewhere; or species that serve as indicators of detrimental environmental conditions. SCDNR recommends that appropriate measures be taken to minimize or avoid impacts to these species of concern. If you are interested in receiving the entire list of the 43 SWAP conservation priority species potentially impacted by this project, please let SCDNR know and we would be glad to provide that for the project.

Large tracts of protected lands located along the Great Pee Dee River may also be impacted by the proposed superfund site discharge project. These include The Great Pee Dee River Heritage Preserve (Darlington County), Pee Dee Station Wildlife Management Area (WMA) (Florence County), and Marsh Furniture WMA and Woodbury WMA (Marion County), as well as numerous additional private properties held in conservation easement. Discharge from the proposed project of any compounds that would alter water chemistry and quality may result in negative impacts to species and habitats along this conservation corridor.

Review of National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps and aerial photography indicate that wetlands and/or hydric soils are present in your project area. SCDNR advises that you consult with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (www.sac.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory) to determine if jurisdictional wetlands are present and if a permit and mitigation is required for activities impacting these areas. If jurisdictional

¹ www.dnr.sc.gov/swap

features are present, SCDNR recommends that developed project plans avoid or minimize impacts where practicable. SCDNR recommends vegetative buffers at least 50' wide be maintained between the construction activities and any wetlands and streams.

These technical comments are submitted to speak to the general impacts of the activities as described through inquiry by parties outside the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. These technical comments are submitted as guidance to be considered and are not submitted as final agency comments that might be related to any unspecified local, state or federal permit, certification or license applications that may be needed by any applicant or their contractors, consultants or agents presently under review or not yet made available for public review. In accordance with its policy 600.01, Comments on Projects Under Department Review, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, reserves the right to comment on any permit, certification or license application that may be published by any regulatory agency which may incorporate, directly or by reference, these technical comments.

Interested parties are to understand that SCDNR may provide a final agency position to regulatory agencies if any local, state or federal permit, certification or license applications may be needed by any applicant or their contractors, consultants or agents. SCDNR would be happy to review further details regarding the project to provide additional input on the potential impacts of any discharges (thermal, chemical, saline, etc.) from this Superfund site remediation. Additional information that would be needed for further evaluation include how chemicals are being treated before being discharged, what compounds would be discharged, and the discharge rate and frequency. This information can be provided to the SCDNR Office of Environmental Programs (OEP) for further agency comment and evaluation. The SCDNR OEP can be reached by emailing environmental@dnr.sc.gov or by visiting www.dnr.sc.gov/environmental.

Should you have any questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at lemerisj@dnr.sc.gov or by phone at 803-734-1396.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joe Lemeris, Jr.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Joseph Lemeris, Jr.
Heritage Trust Program
SC Department of Natural Resources